

Tough Interview Questions

*Edited
by
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General Questions

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General questions

1. Tell me about you!
Keep your answer to one or two minutes; don't ramble. Use your resume summary as a base to start.
2. What do you know about our company?
Do your homework before the interview! Spend some time online or at the library researching the company. Find out as much as you can, including products, size, income, reputation, image, management talent, people, skills, history and philosophy. Project an informed interest; let the interviewer tell you about the company.
3. Why do you want to work for us?
Don't talk about what you want; first, talk about their needs: You would like to be part of a specific company project; you would like to solve a company problem; you can make a definite contribution to specific company goals.
4. What would you do for us? What can you do for us that someone else can't?
Relate past experiences that show you've had success in solving previous employer problem(s) that may be similar to those of the prospective employer.
5. What about the job offered do you find the most attractive? Least attractive?
List three or more attractive factors and only one minor unattractive factor.
6. Why should we hire you?
Because of your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills.
7. What do you look for in a job?
An opportunity to use your skills, to perform and be recognised.
8. Please give me your definition of a (the position for which you are being interviewed).
Keep it brief - give an actions- and results-oriented definition.
9. How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm?
Not long at all - you expect only a brief period of adjustment to the learning curve.
10. How long would you stay with us?
As long as we both feel I'm contributing, achieving, growing, etc.

Experience and management questions

1. You may be over-qualified for the position we have to offer.
Strong companies need strong people. A growing, energetic company is rarely unable to use its people talents. Emphasise your interest in a long-term association, pointing out that the employer will get a faster return on investment because you have more experience than required.
2. What is your management style?
(If you've never thought about this, it's high time you did.) "Open-door management" is best ... And you get the job done on time or inform your management.
3. Are you a good manager? Give an example. Why do you feel you have top managerial potential?
Keep your answer achievement- and task-oriented; emphasise management skills - planning, organising, controlling, interpersonal, etc.

4. What do you look for when you hire people?
Skills, initiative, adaptability.
5. Did you ever fire anyone? If so, what were the reasons and how did you handle it?
You have had experience with this and it worked out well.
6. What do you see as the most difficult task in being a manager?
Getting things planned and done on time within the budget.
7. What do your subordinates think of you?
Be honest and positive ... they can check your responses easily.
8. What is your biggest weakness as a manager?
Be honest and end on a positive note, e.g. "I don't enjoy reprimanding people, so I try to begin with something positive first."

If you are leaving a job

1. Why are you leaving your present job?
Refine your answer based on your comfort level and honesty. Give a "group" answer if possible, e.g. our department was consolidated or eliminated.
2. How do you feel about leaving all of your benefits?
Concerned but not panicked.
3. Describe what you feel to be an ideal working environment.
One in which people are treated as fairly as possible.
4. How would you evaluate your present firm?
An excellent company that afforded me many fine experiences.

Quantifying your experience and accomplishments

It's hard to know what you'll be asked once you're in that room. Here are some sample questions and guidelines to how you should answer them.

1. Have you helped increase sales? Profits? How?
Describe in some detail.
2. Have you helped reduce costs? How?
Describe in some detail.
3. How much money did you account for?
Be specific.
4. How many people did you supervise on your last job?
Be specific.
5. Do you like working with figures more than words?
Be honest but positive.
6. In your current or last position, what features did you like the most? Least?
Be honest but positive.
7. In your current or last position, what are or were your five most significant accomplishments?
Refer to the key accomplishments already identified on your resume.

Job search questions

1. Why haven't you found a new position before now?
Finding a job is easy; finding the right job is more difficult. (You are being "selective.")
2. Had you thought of leaving your present position before? If yes, what do you think held you there?
Challenge, but it's gone now.
3. What do you think of your boss?
Be as positive as you can.
4. Would you describe a situation in which your work was criticised?
Be as positive as you can.
5. What other types of jobs or companies are you considering?
Keep your answer related to this company's field.

Your work habits and style

1. If I spoke with your previous boss, what would he say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
Emphasise skills - don't be overly negative about your weaknesses; it's always safer to identify a lack of a skill as an area for improvement rather than a shortcoming.
2. Can you work under pressures, deadlines, etc.?
Yes, it's a way of life in business.
3. How have you changed the nature of your job?
Improved it ... of course.
4. Do you prefer staff or line work? Why?
Depends on the job and its challenges.
5. In your present position, what problems have you identified that had previously been overlooked?
Keep it brief and don't brag.
6. Don't you feel you might be better off in a different size company? Different type company?
Depends on the job - elaborate slightly.
7. How do you resolve conflict on a project team?
First you discuss the issues privately.
8. What was the most difficult decision you ever had to make?
Try to relate your response to the prospective employment situation.

Salary questions

1. How much are you looking for?
Answer with a question, i.e., "What is the salary range for similar jobs in your company?" If they don't answer, then give a range of what you understand you are worth in the marketplace.
2. What do you know about our company?
Do your homework before the interview! Spend some time online or at the library researching the company. Find out as much as you can, including products, size, income, reputation, image, management talent, people, skills, history and philosophy. Project an informed interest; let the interviewer tell you about the company.
3. How much do you expect, if we offer this position to you?
Be careful; the market value of the job may be the key answer, e.g., "My understanding is that a job like the one you're describing may be in the range of \$_____."
4. What kind of salary are you worth?
Have a specific figure in mind ... don't be hesitant.

Personality questions

1. Do you generally speak to people before they speak to you?
Depends on the circumstances.
2. What was the last book you read? Movie you saw? Sporting event you attended?
Talk about books, sports or films to show that you have balance in your life.
3. What is the toughest part of a job for you?
Be honest; remember, not everyone can do everything.
4. Are you creative?
Yes. Give examples
5. How would you describe your own personality?
Balanced.
6. Are you a leader?
Yes. Give examples.
7. What are your future goals?
Avoid, "I would like the job you advertised." Instead, give long-range goals.
8. What are your strong points?
Present at least three and relate them to the company and job you are interviewing for.
9. What are your weak points?
Don't say you have none. Try not to cite personal characteristics as weaknesses, but be ready to have one if the interviewer presses. Turn a negative into a positive answer: "I am sometimes intent on completing an assignment and get too deeply involved when we are late."

Your career goals

1. If you could start your career again, what would you do differently?
Nothing ... I am happy today, so I don't want to change my past.
2. What career options do you have at the moment?
"I see three areas of interest..." Relate those to the position and industry.
3. How would you describe the essence of success? According to your definition of success, how successful have you been so far?
Think carefully about your answer and relate it to your career accomplishments

What are your salary expectations?

- ☐ I was making Rs 3 lakhs per annum at my last job. I was due for a raise, so I would expect at least that and a 20 to 30 percent increase.
- ☐ *My expectations are that I receive a salary commensurate with my experience taking into account current market rates. Given my background and knowing that I can deliver what you're looking for I would be looking at getting paid in the upper quartile of what the market is paying for people like me.*
- ☐ I'm sure whatever you offer will be a fair amount for a person with my qualifications. Salary is not the most important factor to me. I'm looking for opportunity.

This is the best answer.

This answer is fair, realistic and shows you're not pulling a number out of the air. It demonstrates to the employer that you know what's going on and that you're expectations are reasonable. Also, by quoting the upper quartile range you're indicating to the interviewer a deeply held belief in your abilities

Do you have any questions? (Usually asked by the interviewer at the end of the interview.)

- ☐ No, not really. You seemed to have covered all the basics and I have done some research on the company on my own, so I don't have any at this time.
- ☐ I was wondering about benefits and when they would go into effect. What about stock options? Also, what is the yearly vacation allowance? Does the company match in employees' PPF plans? Do you have a flexible spending plan?
- ☐ *Yes, I do. Thank you for asking. What would you say would be my biggest challenges? What would a typical week look like for a person in my position?*

This is the best answer.

It's important that you ask questions but be careful not to ask too many questions or questions that may embarrass the interviewer/s. Asking too many questions creates a role reversal situation which many

interviewers do not enjoy (they feel as though they're being put under the microscope). Also, be aware that if you're being interviewed by a panel one of the interviewers may be the manager of another. The last thing you want to do is ask a question that the subordinate cannot answer in front of his/her boss.?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

- ☐ *My strength is that I am a hardworker. My weakness is that I get impatient when systems don't work.*
- ☐ *I don't really have any weaknesses that I can think of. Maybe I could use more technical training. My strengths are probably in my ability to deal with technical problems. I usually don't get upset easily, even when I've had to handle some difficult situations. I am fairly easygoing.*
- ☐ *My strengths are in my ability to learn quickly. I've seen a lot of changes in the technical industry. I've had to adjust and learn new programs several times. As far as weaknesses, I really enjoy my work, and sometimes I put in too much time. But by being aware of my tendency to overwork, I have learned to pace myself more and work smarter.*

Tell me about a time when you had to learn a new program or system.

- ☐ *I've taken a lot of courses: Windows, Novell NeWare, Unix and OS/400 are just a few. You name it, and I've taken it. I learn very quickly and have always liked learning new things.*
- ☐ *I always do well learning new programs. I did really well in high school and college computer classes. I have a good head for problem solving and theory. I enjoy doing technical support because I do a variety of things, including providing service to users.*
- ☐ *I was studying MBA while in my previous job. The company I was working for changed from C to C++, and I didn't have time to attend the training program. I learned it on my own through an online program, working a lot of late hours. By staying focused, I was able to get through it and continue my education goal.*

This is the best answer.

This answer demonstrates motivation, determination and flexibility, which are important traits in almost any job. Being able to handle five things at once is almost a prerequisite in this field.

What experience have you had that qualifies you for this position?

- ❑ *My background and experience is in working on a variety of projects and jobs in the high tech industry. Most of my experience has been working with Cobra. I want to learn more about the server side of Java and work for a company that's focused on e-commerce. I want to work with clients and continue to grow and be challenged.*
- ❑ *For the past four years, I have been working in the e-commerce industry. I am proficient working with Java and possess a strong working knowledge of HTML. I have great communication and teamwork skills have repeatedly demonstrated an ability to get results.*
- ❑ *Since I'm not sure what this job involves, I'm not sure what part of my background applies. I have worked with computers for the past 10 years or so. I like working with programs and solving problems. I have been successful in all the jobs I've held. I haven't really found a job that has held my interest, and I know your job would be a challenge and opportunity for me to develop.*

This is the best answer.

This answer provides the interviewer with a good idea of the experiences and skills you will bring to the position. In addition to technical knowledge, communication and teamwork skills, the ability to get results can be critical to most jobs.

When have you been most motivated?

- ❑ *During my first job at a start-up company I had to undergo some rigorous training to understand the product and customer. At the same time, we were actually working with the customer. It required a lot of self-direction and motivation. I thrived on the whole experience - the discipline, the planning and the deadlines. It was a pressure cooker, but I got through it.*
- ❑ *When I have had a specific project to complete. I like to know the specifics of a project from beginning to end. I like definite deadlines, and I like to meet those deadlines. I expect some deviation from the original plan, but I try to stay focused and not let myself drift too far. I have a great attention to detail and like to take my time and do it right the first time.*
- ❑ *When I'm working with people and helping them solve problems. That's what I like about this industry: You are able to advise and assist customers. My strength is communicating and problem solving. I have had several commendations for my customer service work. That's when I'm at my best and most motivated.*

This is the best answer.

It has energy and enthusiasm. Companies are looking for high-energy people who are able to be in the moment. This answer demonstrates self-motivation, passion, energy and ability to cope under pressure. It also provides a specific example of a time when you were highly motivated.

Tell me about yourself and your past experience.

- ❑ *I was born and grew up in Indore. I got married, started a family, and moved to Delhi. My degree is in computer science. I've worked eight years for the same company and have been promoted twice. I'm now looking for something challenging.*
- ❑ *I've always been good at, and liked, working with computers. I didn't finish my degree, but I've worked in different companies in a variety of situations and have received excellent performance reviews. I am a high-energy person. I work independently, and I like a fast-paced environment.*
- ❑ *I have four years experience working in the high tech industry. For the past two years, I have been working as a Web developer. I have experience with most of the software programs on the server side: Javascript, ASP, VB, HTML and SQL Server. I am very organised and able to do multiple projects at once. I want to work in a cutting-edge company where I can add my experience to the mix and be a part of a growing team.*

This is the best answer.

By emphasising specific examples of knowledge-based skills, transferable skills, and personal traits, you give the interviewer a summary or snapshot of yourself. You are also speaking the jargon of the industry

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

- ❑ *My strength is that I am a hardworker. My weakness is that I get impatient when systems don't work.*
- ❑ *I don't really have any weaknesses that I can think of. Maybe I could use more technical training. My strengths are probably in my ability to deal with technical problems. I usually don't get upset easily, even when I've had to handle some difficult situations. I am fairly easygoing.*
- ❑ *My strengths are in my ability to learn quickly. I've seen a lot of changes in the technical industry. I've had to adjust and learn new programs several times. As far as weaknesses, I really enjoy my work, and sometimes I put in too much time. But by being aware of my tendency to overwork, I have learned to pace myself more and work smarter.*

This is the best answer.

This answer gives specific examples of strengths, not just the skill. One of the most important traits employers are looking for is the ability to be flexible and learn new things as changes arise. The weakness question is handled best by leading with a positive statement, slipping in a negative and ending on a positive note. Also, you've shown that you're in control of your weakness and have improved it. P.S: Never offer more than one weakness unless absolutely compelled to.

All about Interview.

Give me an example of a project you handled from start to finish.

- ❑ *As a customer research analyst, I developed a database for the collection of customer data. After collecting the data, I did an analysis using Excel and wrote a summary and evaluation. I worked with the customer's marketing department so the information could be used to monitor and focus on customer behaviour for future planning. The results of my work were that we had now had a user-friendly tool that accurately tracked customer behaviour.*
- ❑ *Whenever I'm given a project, I make sure I handle all the details from start to finish. I use a variety of software tool sets to solve problems. I am really good at staying focused and organised, and I work until the project is complete. I've had some projects that have been exceptional.*
- ❑ *At my current job, we work as a team on projects. We always have meetings and break up the work. We each do our part and make sure we're on target. We primarily work with C++ on a Unix platform. We're a great team, and we've had some significant successes.*

This is the best answer.

The answer gives a specific example of how you handled the project through the problem to the result. Communication, analytical skills, organisational and coordination skills are all demonstrated by this answer

How would your boss describe you and your work style?

- ❑ *He'd say I am a hardworker, good with technology knowledge and a real team player.*
- ❑ *She'd say I have a lot of initiative. I see the big picture and do what has to be done. And that I always meet deadlines, and if I say I'm going to do something, I do. And, lastly, I have the ability to focus on what I'm working on - I am not easily distracted.*
- ❑ *That is very difficult for me to say. I really don't know what he'd say. I guess he'd say that I get along with everyone and that I'm good at what I do, but that's expected. I think he'd say I have good attention to detail. I don't think he'd say anything negative, and if he did, it would probably be that I don't say "no" enough.*

This is the best answer.

Not only did the answer give three positives, but it also gave reasons for the answers. By giving more detail, you give the interviewer a better look at how you think others see you and what you think is positive about your work style.

All about Interview.

Why did you leave your last position?

- ❑ *The company went through a reorganisation, and I was one of 50 people who was let go. We could see the handwriting on the wall beforehand. There were some poor management decisions, and things had started to deteriorate. They even began cutting out some of our perks. I probably would have left eventually anyway.*
- ❑ *I did not find the job as interesting or challenging as I used to. I was dealing with the same issues and problems for a long time. I want to find a job that is stimulating, where I can grow and learn. I'm looking for job satisfaction. I want to have more balance in my life.*
- ❑ *I've set some goals for myself and my career, and unfortunately, I'm at a standstill in my current situation. I have begun to explore options available before I spend too much time in a job where I cannot advance. My goal is to continue to improve myself so that I can eventually be a project manager.*

This is the best answer.

This answer indicates planning and thinking proactively. Sometimes things happen in careers that are out of your control, but at other times, planning gives you more power over your future.

You're done

Critic's Review

- ❑ *Actions speak louder than words*

Escape the pitfalls of non-verbal communication.

- ❑ *Critique your performance*

You're still sweating after the interview? Rate your performance - you may have done better than you think.

- ❑ *The rejection letter*

Great advice on dealing with the disappointment of "thanks, but no thanks".

- ❑ *What all interviewers want to hear*

Anticipating what they want to hear can win you the job.

Actions speak louder than words

by Carole Martin

It begins even before you say your first word in an interview. By the time the interviewer walks toward you, an opinion is already being formed. There you sit waiting to spew out your answers to questions you've prepared for, while you are already being judged by your appearance, posture, smile or nervous look.

A study done at UCLA a few years ago revealed that the impact of a performance was based on 7 percent of the words used, 38 percent on voice quality, and 55 percent on nonverbal communication. Think about that!

Look back at speakers or teachers you've listened to. Which ones stand out as memorable? The ones who were more animated and entertaining or the ones that just gave out information? This is not to say that you have to entertain the interviewer (no jokes, please!), but it does mean that the conversation should be more interactive. If you say you are excited about the prospect of working for this company, but don't show any enthusiasm, your message will probably fall flat. So smile, gesture once in a while, show some energy, and make the experience more pleasurable for both sides.

Here are some nonverbal pitfalls to watch for:

- 1. The handshake: It's your first encounter with the interviewer. He or she holds out his or her hand and receives a limp, damp hand in return - not a very good beginning. Your handshake should be firm - not bone-crushing - and your hand should be dry and warm. Try running cold water on your hands when you first arrive at the interview site. Run warm water if your hands tend to be cold. The insides of your wrists are especially sensitive to temperature control.*
- 2. Your posture: Stand and sit erect. We're not talking "ramrod" posture, but show some energy and enthusiasm. A slouching posture looks tired and uncaring. Check yourself out in a mirror or on videotape.*
- 3. Eye contact: Look the interviewer in the eye. You don't want to stare, as this shows aggression. Occasionally, and nonchalantly, glance at the interviewer's hand as he/she is speaking. On the contrary, by constantly looking around the room while you are talking, you convey a lack of confidence or discomfort with what is being discussed.*
- 4. Your hands: Gesturing or talking with your hands is very natural. Getting carried away with hand gestures can be distracting. Also, avoid touching your mouth while talking. Watch yourself in a mirror while talking on the phone. Chances are you are probably using some of the same gestures in an interview.*
- 5. Don't fidget: There is nothing worse than someone playing with his or her hair, clicking a pen top, tapping the foot, or unconsciously touching parts of the body.*

Preparing what you have to say is important, but practicing how you will say it is imperative. The nonverbal message can speak louder than the verbal message you are sending.

You're still sweating after the interview?

Rate your performance - you may have done better than you think.

by Carole Martin

The interview is over. Wouldn't it be nice if the interviewer handed you a rating slip on your way out the door to let you know how you rated in the interview? But lacking such a luxury, you must learn to review your own performance so that you can learn from the experience.

Use this opportunity to be objective about the situation. Were you prepared and practiced, or were you just "winging" the answers? Could you have been more effective with additional practice? What will you do to prepare for your next interview?

One of the most helpful things you can do post-interview is to let go of your self-recriminations by venting. After the interview, go to your car, or stop in at a coffee shop, and take pen to paper to write about what just happened. Just let your thoughts pour out. When you've finished, put the writing away, and let go! After a few hours, or a day, when you have had a chance to relax and digest the information, go back and revisit what you wrote. What can you learn from this experience? What will you do differently next time?

Rate your performance

On a scale ranging from one to ten (ten being high) how do you rate yourself?

My overall feeling of satisfaction with this interview. _____

Did I arrive on time? _____

How was my introduction - good greeting/handshake/posture? _____

Was I confident and professional at all times? _____

How did I speak - calm, clearly, not overly aggressive? _____

How was my nonverbal communication (body language)? _____

Did I handle the difficult questions with ease, or did I fumble aimlessly? _____

Did I have good rapport with the interviewer? _____

Did I talk about my strengths? _____

Did I talk about my weakness in a positive manner? _____

How did you do? Are you satisfied with your rating? If most of your rating numbers are in the 5 to 10 range, you're probably doing all right. Look carefully at the lower ratings - what were the problems? You may want to consider practicing with someone so that you can obtain more objective feedback on your answers and style.

No matter how your ratings added up, remember that some of what goes on in an interview, and behind the scenes, is out of your control. Also, keep in mind that interviewing is a learned and practiced skill. If you didn't do as well as you would have liked this time, work on your problem areas. Try scripting and practicing difficult questions or issues.

By critiquing your own performance, and learning from your successes and mistakes, you will be more prepared the next time. And, as a result, you will become more confident and accomplished at interviewing. You will also become more objective in choosing whether the job is right for you - not just whether you are right for the job.

The rejection letter ***by Carole Martin***

Summary

- ☐ *Don't let a series of rejections get you down.*
 - ☐ *Acknowledge your feelings, but don't dwell on them.*
 - ☐ *Choose action, not self-pity.*
-

Were you ever the last one picked for a team in school? If so, you are familiar with waiting to be selected and the disappointment of not being among the stars. Interviewing can bring back those same feelings when you are not chosen for the job. You have remained upbeat during the process, hoping to get an offer any day, and instead you receive a letter saying you have not been chosen. You're not alone if you feel let down.

The letter arrived five days after the interview. Pat knew from the return address she had not been chosen for the position. The letter read, "Although we were impressed with your experience and credentials, we have chosen a candidate who was a closer match to our needs at this time." Tears began to well up in her eyes. This was her third rejection in two weeks. "Nobody is ever going to hire me," she thought to herself.

It had never occurred to Pat that more than 100 resumes had been received for the position, and that hers was chosen as one of the top 10. And she didn't realise she had beaten out more than 95 people to be one of the five candidates interviewed in person. OK, so someone else got the job and she didn't. But wouldn't she have been surprised to learn that the person who was chosen had five more years of industry experience? He was a closer match to the job and required less time to get up to speed.

When rejection hits, it may cause multiple feelings and trigger old wounds. Feelings of being ignored or inadequate, powerless, isolated, humiliated or any combination of these emotions is quite typical. You

may feel hurt like Pat, or angry and fed up with the way you are being treated. You may feel at your wit's end after being put through the long interview process over and over, only to end up on the rejection list.

Instead of wallowing in self-pity, you can regain power by staying proactive. If you really want to work for a particular company, write a letter stating how disappointed you are that the position went to another candidate. Remind them once more of all the positive traits you could bring to the organisation. Let them know you are still very interested in working for the company if something should change or open up.

Or you could call and talk to your interviewer if you felt a positive connection. Sometimes you will get an individual who is willing to talk to you about your interview and where you may have fallen short. Taking action will make you feel you at least gave it one more shot. Sometimes things don't work out for the chosen candidate, or the individual changes his or her mind. You never know what will happen, and you will feel more in control for having done something positive.

When you get invited to interview, count that as a positive. You were selected above the others. If you are getting second interviews, you are obviously doing something right. Continue to work on your interview skills and rate yourself after each performance. Just like many other things in you life, the more you do something, the better you get at doing it. Keep up the good work and eventually you will find the right place for you.

*What all interviewers want to hear
(and don't want to hear)
by Michael Spiropoulos*

A highly-effective way of preparing for an interview is to put yourself in the interviewer/employer's shoes before the interview. If you can anticipate what they want to hear you will have gone a long way in winning the job.

To begin with all employers want to hear that you can do the job! This may sound obvious but many people walk out of interviews failing to convince the employer that they can deliver even though they have all the experience and knowledge to do so. Not only do you have to convince the employer that you can do the job but you also have to convince him/her that you can do it better than the other candidates! Here are some great tips that work well:

- *Talk less about your skills and more about your achievements. As much as possible quantify your achievements in measurable outcomes. Say, for example, "As a result of my actions our customer service satisfaction levels increased by 15% or product defects fell by 10%". If you don't have specific amounts offer a best guess. Make sure you can back up your best guess - in other words don't just pull a number out of the air.*

- *Wax lyrical about key achievements that are meaningful to employers. What is meaningful to employers? Try these for size:*

-Productivity levels

-Efficiency/process improvements

-Consistently good customer service

-Attention to quality in terms of service and product

-An ability for their company to respond to changes quickly

- *If you were diligent you would have done your homework before the interview. One of the things you would have been keen on finding out would be the problems or areas of improvement relating to the job you're going for. Your worth in the eyes of the employer will skyrocket if you can utter words to the effect: "My research indicated that one area where your processes can be improved is xyz. That's an area that I can really help you with because I can do abc." Be very careful not to inadvertently put down the employer's operations when saying this.*

Employers also want to hear that you're a highly motivated individual who will be able to fit in with the existing culture. An effective way of doing this is by:

- *Doing your research on the company (this demonstrates high levels of motivation as well as preparedness).*
- *Mention what it is about the job that motivates and excites you, e.g., duties, skills and knowledge required, environment, expected outcomes etc...*
- *Make a point of highlighting why you think you will be able to fit in with their environment. If, for example, you're expected to be a team player, make sure you can demonstrate, by example, what a great team player you are.*

On the other side of the coin there are some things that employers definitely do not want to hear. Avoid these like the plague:

- *Being negative about yourself! Again this may sound obvious, but you would be surprised how many people insist on "opening up" and bearing their souls at interviews. Leave the soul bearing to when you're in the company of friends. Interviews are about selling yourself by highlighting what makes you terrific.*
- *Avoid criticising former employers and/or managers. You may have legitimate gripes but criticising former employers does not make a good impression on potential employers.*
- *Do not dwell on all the problems you faced in your former job. Instead, mention them briefly and then focus on what you did to fix those problems. Don't forget to mention the outcomes in measurable terms.*

All about Interview.

- *Do not just talk about your skills and knowledge. By all means mention them but the successful candidate will demonstrate how these skills and knowledge will specifically add value to the organisation.*

Rehearsal

☐ [Coping with interviews](#)

This comprehensive guide covers everything from questions to ask the interviewer, to your presentation and body language.

☐ [Don't sweat the interview](#)

Preparation and presentation advice to calm the nerves before the interview.

☐ [Dress for success: Casual or casualty?](#)

Despite an increasingly casual workplace, there are still dress codes to be considered.

☐ [Handling multiple interviewers](#)

Master this nerve-wracking interview process.

☐ [How do I make that killer call?](#)

Overcome your telephone reluctance and start dialling.

☐ [Interviewing after a job loss](#)

Create a positive attitude to get you back on track.

Don't sweat the interview

Find tips to help you before, during and after the interview. Remember: the more you prepare up front, the more relaxed you will feel during the interview; the more relaxed you feel, the better you will perform; the better you perform, the more likely you will be to get the job! Makes sense, yes?

So, what's the big deal?

OK, you're revving up for the big interview. What important details do you need to know? First of all, you need to understand what the interview is all about. Your winning resume, cover letter and good use of your networking contacts have won you entree into Potential Employer's office. The interviewer will already have reviewed your resume, which basically provides the hard facts of your employment history and skills.

The interview is a subtle, more subjective aspect of the job-hunting process. Frequently, an interviewer (sometimes without even realising it) will form an opinion of you based on the nuances of your interaction. You're trying to make a good impression here. You need to portray sincerely, politely and enthusiastically that you are knowledgeable about the organisation and have something to offer it. Your resume may well have shown examples of your skills as a team player, but now you need to convince them that you fit their team. In order to make the best impression you can, you need to be prepared, know what you can expect, and know how to handle it if things don't go quite as you had planned.

Preparation

- ☐ *Know how to keep yourself calm. The best way to do this is to be prepared!*
- ☐ *Research the company.*
- ☐ *Research the interviewer, if possible.*
- ☐ *Know what kind of interview to expect - a screening interview, a stress interview....*
- ☐ *Have you done any informational interviews about this industry?*
- ☐ *Know why you want the job.*
- ☐ *Identify your wants and your needs - and know the difference!*
- ☐ *Be able to express, specifically, the marketable skills you have to offer the organisation.*
- ☐ *Be prepared for the standard interview questions and know your answers to them - try taking the*

virtual interview.

- ☐ *Be prepared to answer that killer question.*
- ☐ *Know how to deal with illegal questions tactfully during the interview.*
- ☐ *Prepare questions you wish to ask - only ask questions you can't find answers to yourself.*
- ☐ *Line up your references in advance and verify that they will be good ones.*

Presentation

- ☐ *Find out the standard dress for the organisation.*
- ☐ *Dress on the conservative side.*
- ☐ *Arrive early.*
- ☐ *Bring extra resumes, notepad, pen.*
- ☐ *Be sure you know how to pronounce your interviewer's name correctly.*
- ☐ *Be polite to everyone you meet there. They all count.*
- ☐ *Be personable as well as professional.*
- ☐ *Do not chew gum, smoke, swear or use slang.*

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- ☐ *Be aware of body language, vibes, reactions - use your instincts to keep things on course.*
- ☐ *Assume all questions are asked for a good reason and answer accordingly.*
- ☐ *Do not assume that your interviewer knows how to elicit the information he/she is looking for.*
- ☐ *Feel free to ask for clarification before answering a question.*
- ☐ *Take some time to formulate your answers before you speak.*
- ☐ *Answer all questions honestly, but in the best, most positive light.*

Dress for success: Casual or casualty?

by Carole Martin

Summary:

- ☐ *The traditional interview suit may not be mandatory.*
- ☐ *You'll still want to save jeans and T-shirts for the weekend.*
- ☐ *Women can increasingly get away with wearing pants.*

In a business-casual world, how do I dress for an interview?

Just a few years ago, everyone knew the answer to this question. The standard interview uniform was suit and tie for men, and suit with a skirt for women. Anyone arriving at work in a new suit was presumed to be interviewing elsewhere that day. But now that workplace dress codes have relaxed, both men and women have more choices when it comes to interview attire.

Does that mean the uniform is out?

Not necessarily. It's still important to make a good impression. You just face more decisions about how to do that.

How will I decide what to wear to the interview?

Remember, each company has an individual culture and environment. Try to find out what the standard is for the company before the interview. When you schedule the interview, ask what would be appropriate. Or call the human resources department and ask what the company's dress code is. Sometimes an interviewer will tell you what to wear: "We don't dress up here, so a suit is not necessary." Some people

actually go to the place where they will be interviewing and stand outside at lunchtime or after work to check out employees' clothes.

If not a suit, then what?

A good rule of thumb is to wear something somewhat dressier than what the employees wear to work. Never wear jeans and a T-shirt, especially slogan T-shirts. A jacket is always a safe bet for men and women, with slacks or a skirt. Somehow a jacket seems to pull the outfit together and can cover a multitude of figure problems as well.

But the suit is still a staple in some professions. Sales people, for example, prefer the suited look, as do other professionals such as lawyers and bankers. Whatever you decide to wear, make sure it fits properly and is of the best quality you can afford. What seems like a big investment now will pale in comparison when you get the job.

Remember, whether you are interviewing at an Internet company or a bank, it's always best to keep your outfit on the conservative side. You're giving the interviewer a picture of yourself, so make sure it reflects well on you.

Handling multiple interviewers

Panels and boards and teams

by Carole Martin

Summary:

- ☐ *Speak to each person in the room and make eye contact.*
- ☐ *Plan and prepare as you would for any interview.*

It might feel like you're facing lions and tigers and bears. There you sit alone in front of the room, waiting for the pack to attack with questions. It's really not quite that bad. In fact, there is an upside to this process. You'd probably have to talk to each of these people individually at some point in the process. This way, you get it over all at once.

But how do you deal with so many interviewers in one sitting? The best way is to take them one at a time. The board or panel is not one entity, but several individuals coming together with the common goal of hiring the best candidate for the job. At the same time, each person has his own agenda or department's interest at heart. For example, the HR manager will be checking to make sure you are a good fit with the culture and people working at this company. The hiring manager will want to know about your technical skills or business know-how. And the person from accounting will want to know if you are savvy enough to operate a business budget.

Board or panel interviews are usually rather formal and organised, using a standard set of questions for all applicants. This type of interview is typically used in academia, government or for high-level executives but can be used for any other type of position in any company.

A female client interviewed for a senior administrator job at a major health agency, facing a panel of 10 doctors, nurses, technicians and administrators. She felt like it was an inquisition, not an interview. But she had prepared well and was confident when she faced this tribunal. She looked at each person as he or she asked the question, and continued to look at that person for 30 seconds or so. She then shifted her eye contact to each member of the interviewing team. She made sure she made contact with each set of eyes while answering questions. She felt very much in control and her interview went well. The result was a job offer.

Another multiple-type interview is the team or "good cop/bad cop" interview. The team is usually made up of two interviewers, one who asks the questions and one who takes notes. The two typically trade roles, which can be confusing if they have different styles. In fact, one person may be kind and gentle and the other more harsh or pushy.

Just remember, these inquisitors are working together toward the same end. Treat them equally, not favouring one over the other.

Regardless of the type of interview, the best advice is to prepare and practice beforehand. When you have your script and have rehearsed your answers, you will feel prepared and more confident no matter how many people you have to face.

Lastly, a good tip to remember is to make sure you get each person's business card, hopefully at the beginning of the interview, so you can address each person by name.

How do I make that killer call?

by Burton Nadler

Experts in business communication will tell you that next to public speaking, making a phone call strikes fear in the hearts of even the most seasoned executives. They call this phenomenon "telephone reluctance." To overcome this phobia, we've assembled a list of telephone tips. Review these points, plan your calls, practice what you are going to say and start dialling.

- 1. Say "hello" and acknowledge (and note) the name of person you are speaking with.***
- 2. Say why you are calling and who you wish to speak with. If you are conducting a follow-up call, quickly describe previous communications.***
- 3. Assess the status of your candidacy, confirming whether your fax or mailed documents were received, and, focus on identifying appropriate next steps.***
- 4. Request an appointment for a job or informational interview. Be assertive about this - if the person you are speaking with cannot schedule one, request suggestions for next steps, additional resources or referrals.***

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5. *Thank the person you are speaking with and confirm spelling of all names, mailing and email addresses, phone and fax numbers.*

And don't forget...

- ***Never be impolite, impatient, or pushy. You can always call back if you don't get the information or results you expect.***
- *Stay focused and know what you want before you call. Goal-oriented conversations get the best results. Be realistic about what can be achieved with each call.*
- *Whenever possible, ask to see or speak with someone "who can tell me about entry-level options."*
- *Always write, email, or fax thank you notes.*

What if I get an answering machine?

- ***Don't be shy, always leave a message. Ask for "confirmation that you received my resume and cover letter," or for "information about the position recently posted on the Internet." Leave your name and number.***

How do I develop a Conversation Outline?

Use the above list to develop a "conversation outline," but don't try to memorise a script. Below is a basic sample. Create your own and don't wait until it is perfect to give it a try. The more phone calls you make, the more natural you will become and the easier calls will be to make.

Conversation steps

1. ***Say "hello" and acknowledge (and note) the name of person you are speaking with.***
"Hello, my name is And, your name please?"

2) Say why you are calling and who you wish to speak with. If you are conducting a follow-up call, quickly describe previous communications.
"I am calling about the marketing assistant position and I would like to speak with the director of marketing, please."
or:
"I saw on the Internet that your firm offers wonderful entry-level sales options. Is there a specific person who could tell me more about these positions? Good. That person's name, phone and fax number is? Does he/she have email?"
2. *Assess status of your candidacy, confirming whether your fax or mailed documents were received, and, focus on identifying appropriate next steps. Be assertive about this - request an appointment for a job or informational interview. If the person you are speaking with cannot schedule one, request suggestions for next steps, additional resources or referrals.*
"I emailed a resume to ... of your human resources office. Can I speak with Mr./Ms. ...? I

would like to confirm that the resume was received and clarify next steps. Ask to see the appropriate person, "I'd like to schedule an appointment with Mr./Ms. ..."

3. *Request an appointment for an employment interview or information conversation. If the person you are speaking with cannot schedule one, request suggestions for next steps, additional resources or for a referral.*

"Yes, I understand that decisions regarding formal interviews won't be made for a few weeks. In the meantime could you refer me to someone who is in a sales position? I would like to informally learn about what it is like and ask questions about their experiences. Who would you suggest I speak with?"

4. *Thank the person you are speaking with and confirm spelling of all names, mailing and email addresses, phone and fax numbers.*

"Thank you so much. You have been very helpful. If I have additional questions would it be appropriate to call you again? Again, Mr./Ms. is the best person to contact and their phone and fax number is... Is that correct?"

Create additional outlines and rehearse with friends and family. Let common sense be your guide, but start now!

Interviewing after a job loss

by Sylvia Ho

So, your last job didn't exactly pan out. Maybe your boss or your coworkers were jerks, or you were laid off - or even fired. Now, you are looking forward to your first job interview.

What is your biggest hurdle?

Is it job references, or your spotty resume, or even your former boss? No, it's probably your attitude and preparation. A positive, forward-looking attitude impresses employers, while a negative attitude can be a turn-off. A candidate who is prepared -- who has researched the company s/he is interviewing with and the position and knows what s/he can bring to the job -- appears professional and mature, worthy of being considered. An unprepared candidate gives the appearance of being disorganised and unprofessional and only reinforces any impression that might be given in a bad reference. Here are some "Do's and Don'ts" to improve your attitude and preparation before your big interview:

1. **Don't worry. Worrying is only natural, but most people, at one time or another, had a job that didn't work out. Chances are that your interviewer may have even been let go from a job. Worrying saps your energy and leaves you powerless. Instead, take some active steps before the interview to practice responding to any possible objections that you believe an employer would have to hiring you.**
2. **Counter a poor reference with many other good ones. Prepare ahead if you think your former boss may give you a bad reference. Call other former employers who thought well of you and would give you a good reference, and obtain a letter of recommendation. The more letters of recommendation you are able to provide, the less significant a bad reference will appear. Ultimately, a decision-maker will weigh all the evidence and may weigh references in your favour.**

3. *Prepare to answer hard questions professionally. Hard questions are part of any interview, but they can seem even harder when your last job did not work out. Prepare possible hard questions and the answers you would give to them if asked. Have your friends or relatives listen to your answers and give you their opinions on how the answers sound. There is no shame in having left a job if you can articulate why the job didn't work out for you and what you learned from the experience.*
4. *Know your accomplishments and your value. Believe that you do bring value and skills to a prospective employer. Spend some time thinking about what you accomplished at your previous jobs. What skills do you bring to the table? Are these skills in demand? Make a list and review it again and again. This will improve your attitude and self-confidence and will help you at your interview.*
5. *Don't blame other people for your previous work problems. Responsible employees are in demand. Interviewers do not like candidates who make excuses. Discuss your accomplishments instead of the negative aspects of your previous job. If you have to talk about why the job did not work out, discuss what you learned from the experience that will make you a better employee in the future.*
6. *Keep searching and don't get discouraged. The reason you did not get a job may have absolutely nothing to do with you. If you did not get the job, do write and then call the interviewer to find out why you were not hired. Make it clear that you are not trying to change their decision, only to get information that will help you in your job search. Learn from each interview and continue searching.*

Don't get discouraged!

Research, rehearse and relax

No matter how well qualified you are for a job or how articulate you are about your strengths and experience, there is nothing that can replace preparation. Once you have practiced asking and answering questions, the next step is to relax and remind yourself that:

- ☐ *There is no question you cannot answer,*
- ☐ *You are well suited to the position, and*
- ☐ *You would be an asset to the company.*

Visualise yourself sitting in the interview feeling serene and confident. Get a good night's sleep before the interview, arrive a few minutes early, take a few deep breaths and seize the day.

All about Interview.

- ☐ [Research the Company](#)
- ☐ [Rehearse Your Presentation](#)
- ☐ [Relax and Project Self-Confidence](#)

Research Before the Interview

Presented by Don Monaco of The Strickland Group

Perform "due diligence". Do your homework before interviews by researching the interviewing individual(s), the company and the industry. There are a variety of ways to research:

- ☐ *Library (books, periodicals, magazines, etc.)*
- ☐ *Literature from company's public relations department*
- ☐ *Annual reports*
- ☐ *Electronic sources of information (Internet etc.)*

You should become familiar with the organisation's products, structure, services, financial status, competitors, reputation and any recent major changes. In addition, try to discover information about the person who you will meet background, style, education, and their "hot button" issues.

Preparation for the Interview

Presented by Don Monaco of The Strickland Group

To fully prepare for any interview you should be able to identify these things in yourself:

- ☐ *Transferable skills*
- ☐ *Key accomplishments*
- ☐ *Management style*
- ☐ *Unique selling or promotional features*
- ☐ *Personal and professional strengths*

You must be able to articulate key aspects of yourself in the interview. An inability to express yourself clearly is often more of a deficiency than the lack of required experience for a specific opportunity.

One of the best ways to prepare for interviewing is by "scripting" of your lines in answer to key interview questions. Career counsellors and outplacement specialists alike, remind transitioning executives and professionals of the necessity to look and act the part of a self-confident and successful person even if one does not particularly feel it.

With a friend or colleagues, organise and review your answers to both tough and basic questions.

Examples of Tough Interview Questions:

- ☐ *How has your personal background (upbringing, schooling) influenced what you are today, your career progression, and your management/people style?*
- ☐ *How do you define success? How "successful" have you been?*
- ☐ *What mistakes have you made during your career?*
- ☐ *What is the most adverse situation with which you have had to deal with in your personal or professional life? How did you deal with it? What was the outcome?*
- ☐ *What is the difference between a good position and an excellent one?*

Examples of Basic Interview Questions:

- ☐ *Tell me something about yourself.*
- ☐ *Why are you looking for a new job or why did you leave your old one?*
- ☐ *What are your goals, where would you like to be in five years? (Are your goals compatible with our needs?)*
- ☐ *Why should we hire you, what is unique about you?*
- ☐ *What are your salary requirements?*

In preparing your answers to these questions, think of yourself as a candidate in a political campaign. A skilful candidate is focused on the message he or she wants to communicate. Rather than being led by the interviewer's questions, candidates stay in control with responses that articulate what they want the listener to remember. Ask yourself, "What is my goal in the interview?"

The most important question is "Why should we hire you?" Answering this will require research and preparation. You must first identify and understand the needs of the company and the problems that the ideal candidate must be prepared to solve. Information sources include networking contacts, search firms, vendors, the press, the Internet, news outlets. Be prepared to convince the interviewer that you are uniquely qualified to make a contribution.

Additional Interview Tips:

- ☐ *List five adjectives that describe you and then list five adjectives that would describe the ideal candidate for the position. Is it a good match? Where are the gaps?*
- ☐ *Read the company's annual report, and make note of adjectives used to describe the leadership and the employees. Is the culture one in which you will be happy and do your best work? Be prepared with brief anecdotes about your work that illustrate the qualities that the company values.*

The more you practice your answers, the more your confidence will grow. Rehearse until you can easily answer questions with clarity, spontaneity and crispness.

Our experience has been that everyone can use interview practice. You might be surprised to know a secret, that is, even the most extroverted, self-confident, verbal, "sales-person type" needs help in thinking through, organising the answers to and rehearsing the interview questions.

Relax and Project Self-Confidence

Presented by Don Monaco of The Strickland Group

Relax -- you are ready and confident. Arrive about 10-15 minutes ahead of time so that you can make sure that your appearance is intact.

- ☐ *Act like a consultant not an applicant. Think of yourself in problem-solving mode, in partnership with your interviewer.*
- ☐ *Engage in a dialogue, don't put yourself in a question/answer mode. Let silence occur.*
- ☐ *Present your value, and always protect your dignity and self worth. Be engaging and enthusiastic.*

Always leave the interview with a knowledge of the next step and with a sense of how your candidacy will be evaluated. Ask: "How would you like to proceed? Have I provided you with the information you need? Where are you in the process? What will happen next? When should I plan to follow up?"

The Interview

□ **"Tell me about yourself?" Know how to answer this Question.**

It's one of the most frequently asked questions in an interview. Your response to this request will set the tone for the rest of the interview.

□ **Dealing with questions about salary history**

Currently underpaid? Learn how to handle awkward salary questions with grace.

□ **Do you have any questions?**

Never let an opportunity to pass, when the interviewer says "Any questions?"

□ **Encountering behaviour-based interviews**

How you have responded to certain situations in the past can give an employer a good idea of how you will respond to similar situations in the future.

□ **How you say something is as important as what you say**

Body language represents as much as 60% of our communication, so it's important to deliver your words very carefully.

□ **Interview cheat sheet**

Relax - a cheat sheet is not really cheating. It's a checklist to make sure you stay focused before, during and after the interview.

□ **Overcoming interview nerves**

If your performance at interviews suffers because of nerves, read these great tips on how to overcome them.

□ **Questions to ask the interviewer**

Be prepared when the interviewer asks, "Do you have any questions?"

□ **The dreaded "weakness" questions**

Use our smart strategies to answer this anticipated question.

□ **Tough interview questions**

Don't let the tough questions stop you from performing well in the interview.

□ **Why should we hire you?**

This is a broad question that can take you down the wrong road unless you've done some thinking ahead of time. Think of yourself as the product.

Tell me about yourself

It's one of the most frequently asked questions in an interview: "Tell me about yourself?" Your response to this request will set the tone for the rest of the interview. For some, this is the most challenging question to answer, as they wonder what the interviewer really wants to know and what information they should include.

Priya dreaded this question. When it was the first one asked at her interview, she fumbled her way through a vague answer, not focusing on what she could bring to the job.

"I'm happily married and originally from Delhi," she began. "My husband was transferred here three months ago, and I've been getting us settled in our new home. I'm now ready to go back to work. I've worked in a variety of jobs, usually customer service-related. I'm looking for a company that offers growth opportunities."

The interview went downhill after that. She had started with personal information and gave the interviewer reason to doubt whether she was an employee who would stay for very long.

She's married, and when her husband gets transferred that means she has to leave; she did it once and can do it again.

- *She has some work experience with customers but didn't emphasise what she did.*
- *She is looking to grow. What about the job she is applying for? Will she stay content for long?*

The secret to successfully responding to this free-form request is to focus, script and practice. You cannot afford to wing this answer, as it will affect the rest of the interview. Begin to think about what you want the interviewer to know about you.

Focus

List five strengths you have that are pertinent to this job (experiences, traits, skills, etc.). What do you want the interviewer to know about you when you leave?

Priya is strong in communications and connecting with people. She has a strong background and proven success with customer relationships. Her real strength is her follow-through. She prides herself on her reputation for meeting deadlines.

Scripting

Prepare a script that includes the information you want to convey. Begin by talking about past experiences and proven success:

"I have been in the customer service industry for the past five years. My most recent experience has been handling incoming calls in the high tech industry. One reason I particularly enjoy this business, and the challenges that go along with it, is the opportunity to connect with people. In my last job, I formed some significant customer relationships resulting in a 30 percent increase in sales in a matter of months."

Next, mention your strengths and abilities:

"My real strength is my attention to detail. I pride myself on my reputation for following through and meeting deadlines. When I commit to doing something, I make sure it gets done, and on time."

Conclude with a statement about your current situation:

"What I am looking for now is a company that values customer relations, where I can join a strong team and have a positive impact on customer retention and sales."

Practice

Practice with your script until you feel confident about what you want to emphasise in your statement.

Your script should help you stay on track, but you shouldn't memorise it -- you don't want to sound stiff and rehearsed. It should sound natural and conversational.

Even if you are not asked this type of question to begin the interview, this preparation will help you focus on what you have to offer. You will also find that you can use the information in this exercise to assist you in answering other questions. The more you can talk about your product - you - the better chance you will have at selling it.

Dealing with questions about salary history

by Michael Chaffers

Q: How do I respond to the salary history question when I am currently grossly underpaid for the work that I do, and I am trying to correct that as I interview for new jobs?

A: Your best strategy is to keep them focused on what is an appropriate amount for you given your experience, skills and credentials today. This requires some homework, since you have to translate those intangibles into a dollar figure or a range of figures. In addition, be prepared to explain why you are seeking a significant jump in your salary and be ready to help the employer justify paying you this increased amount - those people do not want to feel as if they are overpaying you. You could try saying, "I chose to work at my last job for less than my market value for very specific reasons (e.g., gain experience, restart career, they had money problems). Now that I have benefited from experience, as I look for a new employer, I want to make sure that I am being paid fairly for my talents." As you follow this advice, do not forget that you have to be prepared to discuss your current salary, even though it ought to be irrelevant. If that information matters to the employer, they will either insist on talking about it, or they will learn it another way. Try to cover the issue quickly and steer the conversation back to its rightful place - what you ought to make, given the value of your talents in the market.

Do you have any questions?

by Carole Martin

At the conclusion of a job interview you may be asked, "Do you have any questions?" A common answer is, "No, I think you've covered everything very well." This is the wrong answer. You have passed up your opportunity to ask some critical questions could help you decide whether you want to work for this company.

But, what questions are appropriate? When Maria was asked if she had any questions at the conclusion of her first interview, she began asking about sick time and vacation days and when she would be able to start taking them. The interviewer was taken aback. "Is this what this woman cares about? Time off? This doesn't sound like someone who will come in and get the work done," the interviewer thought to himself. Clearly, Marianne had asked inappropriate questions.

Timing is key

The first round of interviews is about discovery, learning about the job and the company, not the benefits or raises. Good questions to ask in the first round are about the job content, and the company's culture and future.

David had prepared ahead of time and was ready when the manager asked if he had any questions. David asked, "What types of projects would be forthcoming over the next six months?" The manager was eager to tell David about prospects for future business and the plans for future growth. This discussion prompted more questions from David. The interview ended after a lively exchange and on a very upbeat note. David's questions were appropriate and timely.

The interview should be an exchange of information: What does the company want, and what do you have to offer? But it is also important to discuss what the company has to offer, and what you want. It is essential to express an interest in the company and the work being done. By asking questions, you will demonstrate investigative skills, illustrate you are particular about the company you work for and that you are not going to take just any offer.

It is also important to consider whom you are talking to. The human resources person is the one likely to know about job descriptions, qualities being sought and the morale or company culture. The hiring manager, your future boss, is the person to ask about the department, the team you will be working with and the job's challenges.

What about the benefits?

But what about those other questions about benefits, stock options and time off? As the interview process unfolds, there will be time to ask about the benefits and practical matters. Often the human resources department will provide you with a brochure or information packet. Obviously, you will need this information to assess an offer, but all in good time.

What you should not ask in the first rounds of interviewing

- *Don't ask about salary, stock options, vacation, holiday schedule or benefits.*
- *Don't ask questions that have already been answered in the interview, just for the sake of asking something.*
- *Don't grill the interviewer. It's OK to ask about the person's background, but only as an interested party, not an interrogator.*

Questions you should ask in the first rounds of interviewing

- *May I see a copy of the job description?*
- *Why has the job become available?*
- *What qualities are you seeking in the person for this job?*
- *What is the next step?*
- *When will you make your selection?*

Prepare five or six questions before the interview and take them with you. When the time comes for you to ask questions, take out your list. This will show good preparation on your part. This time is a valuable opportunity for you to get the information you need to help you make an informed decision

Encountering behaviour-based interviews and questions

More and more employers are conducting a different type of interview than they did five or 10 years ago. Known as "behaviour-based interviews," these interviews are filled with behaviour-based questions designed to elicit patterns of accomplishments relevant to the employer's situation. They are specific and challenge interviewees to provide concrete examples of their achievements in different types of situations. Such interviews are based on the simple belief that how a job candidate has responded to certain types of situations in the past is a good predictor of how that person will behave in a similar future situation.

Behaviour-based questions are likely to begin with some variation of:

- ☐ *Give me an example of a time when you . . .*
- ☐ *Give me an example of how you . . .*
- ☐ *Tell me about how you . . .*

This is an opportunity for you to sell your positives with an example or two. Briefly describe the situation, enthusiastically explain what you did (adding information as to why if you think this would not be evident), and indicate the outcome.

Obviously you want to select examples that promote your skills and have a positive outcome. Even if the interviewer asks about a time when something negative happened, try to select an example where you were able to turn the situation around and something positive came out of it. For example, if asked, "Tell me about a time you made a bad decision." Try to identify an example where:

- ☐ *Even though it wasn't the best decision, you were able to pull something positive out of the situation.*
- ☐ *Although it was a poor decision, you learned from it and in the next similar situation you made a good decision or know how you will handle it differently the next time a similar situation arises.*
- ☐ *It was bad decision but the negative outcome had only minor impact.*

In other words, try to pull something positive - either that you did or that you learned - out of even a negative experience you are asked to relate. As you prepare for your interview, consider situations where you:

- ☐ *Demonstrated leadership*
- ☐ *Solved a problem*
- ☐ *Increased company profits*
- ☐ *Made a good decision/made a poor decision*
- ☐ *Handled change (not money, but changing events)*
- ☐ *Handled criticism*
- ☐ *Met a deadline/missed a deadline*
- ☐ *Worked as part of a team*

Add to this list other behavioural questions you think of that apply to the job for which you are applying. For example, if the job includes making presentations, expect questions about a speech where you achieved your goal or conversely about a time when your speech failed.

How you say something is as important as what you say
by Michael Spiropoulos

Summary

Communication experts say that:

- ☐ *Only 10% of our communication is represented by what we say*
- ☐ *30% is represented by our sounds*
- ☐ *60% is represented by our body language.*

Obviously what you say at an interview will go a long way to securing you the job. However, how you say things also plays an extremely critical role. In fact, some experts strongly contend that how you say things is more important.

As a job seeker it's your responsibility to ensure that you prepare for both. Below you'll find five very useful tips on how you should be saying things at an interview. Follow these tips carefully and you'll significantly improve your chances of winning that job. Good luck!

1. **Avoid saying anything that does not put you in a positive light:** You'd be surprised how many people are critical of themselves at an interview. They're just shooting themselves in the foot. Research shows that negative comments are:

a) remembered more easily and

b) attract follow up questions!

The last thing anyone needs at an interview is follow-up questions on negative points.

1. **Don't just talk about your skills and experience, try also to show how they can benefit your new employer:** Try to think of ways your skills and knowledge will benefit the company. Putting yourself in the shoes of an employer really helps. Here's a tip: All employers are very interested in: productivity improvements (efficiency), improved customer service, attention to detail and quality and flexibility.

Here's an example for you: "My extensive skills in Word and PowerPoint means that I will be able to complete many of my duties quicker and with less mistakes than they are currently being completed. This will release me to assist you in other areas."

2. **Avoid timid or uncertain language:** Because of cultural norms we tend to use slightly belittling language when asked to talk about our strengths. For example: We often use expressions such as: *I feel I could, I think I could, Perhaps I would.* All these statements weaken the statements that follow, so avoid them as much as possible. There's a big difference between *"I feel I could do a good job"* and *"I could do a good job."*
3. **Use examples as much as possible:** Wherever possible try to use examples of what you've done rather than just using descriptors. Examples are entertaining and remembered more easily! If for example, you're asked to describe yourself, instead of saying things like: *fair, honest and hardworking* use examples such as:

"If we're busy at work I'm happy to stay back until the work is completed. I feel guilty about leaving things half done and going home. Also, if there's a problem at work I'm the sort of person who prefers to gently bring it out in the open rather than turning a blind eye or sweeping it under the carpet. Experience had taught me that problems not dealt with quickly tend to get a lot worse."

4. **How to be humble:** If you feel that *"I"* statements are beyond you or that your intuition is telling you that you might be coming across as a little too bold there is a technique on getting your message across strongly but at the same time maintaining an acceptable level of humility. That technique involves using the third person. For example, instead of saying: *"I'm a hard worker."* You can say, *"My boss always used to say how hard I worked."*

Interview Cheat Sheet

by Carole Martin

Relax - a cheat sheet is not really cheating. It's a checklist to make sure you stay focused before, during and after the interview. Creating a cheat sheet will help you feel more prepared and confident. You shouldn't memorise what's on the sheet or check it off during the interview. You should use your cheat sheet to remind you of key facts. Here are some suggestions for what you should include on it.

In the days before the interview

Draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. On the left side, make a bulleted list of what the employer is looking for based on the job posting. On the right side, make a bulleted list of the qualities you possess that fit those requirements.

- *Research the company, the industry and the competition: Prepare your 60-second personal statement: Your answer to the, "Tell me about yourself," question.*
- *Write at least five success stories to answer behavioral interview questions ("Tell me about a time when..." or "Give me an example of a time...").*
- *List 10 questions to ask the interviewer about the job, the company and the industry.*
- *Research salary data and determine your worth: Determine your salary needs based on your living expenses - what is your bottom line?*
- *Get permission from your references to use their names.*

Before you go to the interview

- *Do you look professional? Check yourself in the mirror; part of your confidence will come from looking good.*
- *Carry these items to the interview: Several copies of your resume on quality paper. A copy of your references. A pad of paper on which to take notes (notes are optional). Directions to the interview site.*
- *Prepare answers to the 10 most common interview questions:*
 1. *Tell me about yourself.*
 2. *Why did you leave or are you leaving your last position?*
 3. *What do you know about this company?*
 4. *What are your goals?*
 5. *What are your strengths and weaknesses?*
 6. *Why do you want to work for this company?*
 7. *What has been your most significant achievement?*
 8. *How would your last boss and colleagues describe you?*
 9. *Why should we hire you?*
 10. *What are your salary expectations?*

Upon Arrival

- *Arrive early - enter the building 10 minutes before your appointment.*

All about Interview.

- *Review your prepared stories and answers.*
- *Go to the restroom and check your appearance one last time.*
- *Announce yourself to the receptionist in a professional manner.*
- *Stand and greet your interviewer with a hearty, not a bone-crushing handshake.*
- *Smile and look into the interviewer's eyes.*

During the Interview

- *Try to focus on the points you have prepared without sounding rehearsed or stiff.*
- *Relax and enjoy the conversation. Learn what you can about the company.*
- *[Ask questions](#) and listen; read between the lines.*
- *At the conclusion, thank the interviewer and determine the next steps.*
- *Ask for the interviewer's business card so you can send a follow-up letter.*

After the Interview

- *As soon as possible, write down what you are thinking and feeling.*
- *Later in the day, look at what you wrote and assess how you did.*
- *Write a [follow-up](#) or a [thank-you letter](#) reminding the interviewer of your qualities.*

Overcoming interview nerves

by Michael Spiropoulos

CEMAP

Do you suffer from interview nerves? If you answered "yes" you'll probably not be surprised to learn that you're not alone. In fact, most people experience a degree of nervousness before and during an interview. Whilst some people can control their nerves and use the excess energy to their advantage others feel trapped and are unable to perform to their best. Moreover, some people completely undermine their chances of success due to out of control interview anxiety.

If you feel that your performance at interviews suffers as a result of your anxiety you'll be pleased to learn that there are things you can do that will help you lessen those debilitating nerves. Here are five practical tips, some of which you can begin applying immediately.

Tip 1: Attend as many interviews as you can. The more you practice, the better you'll become and the better you become, the less nervous you'll be. The more interviews you attend, the less strange and foreign they'll seem to you. Also, it is likely that you will have some idea of which areas you need to improve, which should make you better prepared for the next interview.

Tip 2: Prepare, prepare and prepare. The more prepared you are for the interview the more likely it is that you'll be able to answer the questions with a high level of authority. The better you can answer questions the more likely it is that your confidence will grow during the course of the interview. Of course, the opposite happens when you can't answer a question properly. When you're preparing make sure you cover all bases including the three very important questions:

- ☐ *Can you do the job?*
- ☐ *Will you fit it in?*
- ☐ *Are you keen to do a good job?*

Tip 3: Avoid thinking that the job you're going for is "The perfect job for me and if I don't get it I'll never be able to find a job like this one ever again!" These "all or nothing" attitudes are extreme and only serve to unnecessarily heighten anxiety levels. How do you know it's the perfect job for you? Don't forget that no one really knows what a job is like until they start it. It may seem great on paper but that doesn't mean it is. And how do you know that there won't be a better job for you tomorrow or next week or next month?

Tip 4: Avoid trying to give the perfect answer – you'll only add to your anxiety. If you think about it, the perfect answer is a virtual impossibility because what you may think is perfect, the interviewer may not. So why not settle for a good answer that covers the important points?

Tip 5: Never belittle yourself. Too many people add to their nervousness levels by not believing that they're good enough or that they're as good as their competition. Rather than focusing on their strengths they focus on their weaknesses. It stands to reason that the less you believe in yourself the less confident you'll be. Don't think about the competition, after all there's nothing you can do about it. Just focus on giving the best interview you can.

Questions to ask the interviewer

Even if you don't ask any questions during an interview, many employers will ask you if you have any. How you respond will affect their evaluation of you. So be prepared to ask insightful questions about the organisation.

Good topics to touch on include:

- ☐ *the competitive environment in which the organisation operates*
- ☐ *executive management styles*
- ☐ *what obstacles the organisation anticipates in meeting its goals*
- ☐ *how the organisation's goals have changed over the past three to five years.*

Generally, it is most unwise to ask about pay or benefits or other similar areas. The reason is that it tends to make you seem more interested in what the organisation can do for you. It is also not a good idea to simply have no questions at all. Doing so makes you appear passive rather than curious and interested.

Quick Tip

Q: I've been on several interviews lately, and invariably the interviewer invites me to ask questions about the position or the company. What kinds of questions would be most appropriate to show genuine interest? I know what not to ask, e.g. "How much am I gonna make at this place?" Still, I think it is possible that I have done less than my best in this regard.

A: I would ask the following questions:

- 1. What are the main objectives and responsibilities of the position?***
- 2. How does the company expect these objectives to be met?***
- 3. What obstacles are commonly encountered in reaching these objectives?***
- 4. What is the desired time frame for reaching the objectives?***
- 5. What resources are available from the company and what must be found elsewhere to reach the objectives?***

The dreaded weakness question

***What to avoid and how to impress interviewers
by Michael Spiropoulos***

It seems that these days most interviewers want to know what your weaknesses on the job are. This is not an easy question at the best of times, but in an interview situation when you're trying your best to impress it can be extremely trying and, if you're not careful - dangerous.

Unfortunately, most people fail to do themselves any favours when answering this question. Even worse, some job candidates talk themselves right out of a job.

But don't despair. There's good news. Below you'll find several user-friendly strategies that will help you turn the weakness question to your advantage. In fact, with a little bit of practice you can actually make yourself look good!

Four things to always avoid:

- 1. Never say you don't have any weaknesses.***
- 2. Never say something that's really going to hurt you.***
- 3. Avoid transparent clichés like: "I work too hard." Too many people use them.***
- 4. Never offer more than one weakness (unless specifically prompted) and be as brief as possible.***

Three strategies that work (choose the one that suits you best):

1. *Talk about a skill that is unconnected to the job you're going for, e.g., if you're going for a job that does not require any knowledge in, say, Microsoft Powerpoint and Access, you can say: "Whilst I have good knowledge with Microsoft Word and Excel my knowledge with Powerpoint and Access is not up to scratch. (Notice how, in this example, you can air your strong points even though the question was about your weaknesses!)."*
2. *Talk about something you're in the process of learning, or wishing to learn, and make sure it's not critical the job, e.g., "I have not entirely completed my studies in business. However, I have only x amount of time to go before I attain my qualifications. Once I finish I'm also intending to further my studies by enrolling in..." (Notice that what you're really talking about here is the fact that you're studying and are keen to keep on learning).*
3. *Talk about a past mistake and how you've learned from it, e.g., "I used to worry about not having the time to keep up to date with all the technical details in regards to the latest software changes. However, I've since learned that perfect knowledge in our industry is not a viable goal. And besides I am now accessing information on a need to know basis which I find to be a much more efficient way of using information." (Notice that you're talking about a) learning from past mistakes and b) working more efficiently than you used to. These are both qualities that employers look for).*

Why should we hire you?

by Carole Martin

This is another broad question that can take you down the wrong road unless you've done some thinking ahead of time. This question is purely about selling yourself. Think of yourself as the product. Why should the customer buy?

The wrong track

Candidate A answers by saying, "Because I need and want a job." That's nice, but the bottom line here is, "What can you do for us?"

Candidate B says, "I'm a hard worker and really want to work for this company." The majority of people think of themselves as hard workers -- and, why this company?

The right track

The answer to this question is, "Because I'm a good fit for the position." Getting warmer, but more details, please.

You answer, "I have what it takes to solve problems and do the job." This is the best answer so far. Expand on this, and you've got it.

Develop a sales statement

The more detail you give, the better your answer will be. This is not a time to talk about what you want. Rather, it is a time to summarise your accomplishments and relate what makes you unique.

Product inventory exercise

The bottom line of this question is, "What can you do for this company?"

Start by looking at the job description or posting. What is the employer stressing as requirements of the job? What will it take to get the job done? Make a list of those requirements.

Next, do an inventory to determine what you have to offer as a fit for those requirements. Think of two or three key qualities you have to offer that match those the employer is seeking. Don't underestimate personal traits that make you unique; your energy, personality type, working style and people skills are all very relevant to any job.

The sales pitch: You are the solution

From the list of requirements, match what you have to offer and merge the two into a summary statement. This is your sales pitch. It should be no more than two minutes long and should stress the traits that make you unique and a good match for the job.

Example

"From our conversations, it sounds as if you're looking for someone to come in and take charge immediately. It also sounds like you are experiencing problems with some of your database systems.

With my seven years of experience working with financial databases, I have saved companies thousands of dollars by streamlining systems. My high energy and quick learning style enable me to hit the ground and size up problems rapidly. My colleagues would tell you I'm a team player who maintains a positive attitude and outlook. I have the ability to stay focused in stressful situations and can be counted on when the going gets tough. I'm confident I would be a great addition to your team."

What makes you unique?

Completing an exercise around this question will allow you to concentrate on your unique qualities. Like snowflakes, no two people are alike. Take some time to think about what sets you apart from others.

- *"Never miss deadlines."*
- *"Bring order to chaos."*
- *"Good sense of humor"*
- *"Great attention to detail."*

Let the interviewer know that you have been listening to the problem and have what it takes to do the job - that you are the solution to the problem.

Wrapping Up

- [Ten reasons why you didn't get that job](#)

An honest look at some of the reasons why we aren't always successful in landing the job we want.

- [Job interview follow-up](#)

Is following up a job interview a good idea? We explore the answers.

- [The important tips on what to do after an interview](#)

The interview does not finish when you walk out the door. Use this guide to effectively follow up on your interview.

Negotiations

- [Are you ready to negotiate your salary?](#)

Preparation is paramount in any salary negotiation. Take this quiz to see if you're ready.

- [Dealing with questions about salary history](#)

If you're underpaid in your current job, there are always ways to rectify it when interviewing for a new position.

- [How do I figure out what I'm worth?](#)

A series of questions and answers to help you determine what you should be getting paid.

- [Top ten tips for salary negotiations](#)

Negotiate your way to a better salary.

Ten real reasons why you didn't get that job!

by Teresa Godwin

OK, we have all been there and suffered disappointment when we didn't get the job that we wanted or needed. Some brave souls might have asked for some feedback and were most likely told that there was someone more qualified, who was a better match. Sometimes, however, things are out of your hands

1. **The vacancy has disappeared!**

This may be quite unusual, but it has happened before and will probably happen again. Things have moved on since the ad was placed. Budgets have been withdrawn, the Head of Department has called a review of the structure that could result in less staff, not more. There are all sorts of possibilities here. Why didn't the organisation call it off? Well, they might think that they will lose credibility (not exactly effective management is it?), and if things are that fluid, they may even change back again. The managers would like to keep their options open. But would you have taken the day off for the interview if you had known?

2. **Equal opportunities/The dreaded internal candidate.**

A contradiction here. Some organisations have policies that demand all vacancies be advertised. But what you don't know is that there is someone who has been seconded to the post for the

past 18 months. They want the job, the manager wants them to have the job, but policy demands the post is advertised. A similar state of affairs applies when there is a strong internal candidate. Your chances of success are somewhat diminished here.

3. **Your face didn't fit.**

You were assertive, outgoing, and confident, in fact just like everyone else on the team. These attributes usually go in your favour BUT the manager needed some balance, someone to bring calm and stability. But if you are naturally quiet and reserved - their target might have been an extrovert who would bring those shy wallflowers into the sun. But of course you can't change who you are, and why should you want to try?

4. **You remind them of someone they once worked with.**

Someone they would rather forget. Also known as the halos and horns effect. The last person they appointed with short jet black hair and small features was unreliable, didn't want to answer the phone and guess what - someone else's characteristics are superimposed onto yours. (Of course it can work in reverse, when you are seemingly endowed with personality traits that they like - 'Reminds me of Jane when she was our trainee').

5. **The job is not what you thought it was.**

They know your skills will be under-utilised. The copywriter has done what they think is a good job with the wording of the ad. The recruiters know you will be bored rigid inside a month. (But they have been pleased with the quality of the response!)

6. **The manager feels threatened by your abilities.**

This where some manager's insecurities shine out. They feel that you are over qualified, wouldn't fit in with the rest of the team, or anything else they can think of. Of course in reality they can feel you snapping at their heels!

7. **Your skills are not good enough.**

Painful though this may be, candidates do sometimes apply for jobs that are just out of their reach. Unless you are offered a job by a firm that are prepared to train, mould and invest in your future, it is in your own interests that you don't get this one.

8. **Most of the candidates could do the job.**

This does happen - when there is nothing to choose between the majority of the short-listed candidates. It can be the luck of the draw - literally. A TV program once showed two equally qualified candidates names being placed in a bin and the person whose name was drawn out got the job!

9. **You were not available to start Monday.**

Someone else could. Being available immediately can be a real bonus for the harassed manager.

10. **There was someone else who had the edge.**

You were beaten fair and square. We all like to think that we are good at what we do, and sometimes can be hard to accept that on the day there was someone else who was a better fit. It does happen, and some days it's not you.

Sorry if all this is a bit depressing there is one thing to hang onto. Sometimes it is just not your fault, and it didn't really matter how well you did, the odds were just stacked against you. Knowing this should help you keep things in perspective. You need to concentrate on the things that you can control - the things that you meant to say but didn't, the opportunities didn't grasp. Remember you want (and need) to work in an organisation that wants YOU, where your skills are valued and where you can personally flourish. Review

every interview that you have, learn from the experience and move on. Persistence is the key to success.

Job interview follow-up

by Barbara Reinhold

Question: I interviewed recently for an education and sales position. I feel that I met all their position criteria and the interview went fairly well. The interviewers said that they would notify me within four weeks one way or the other. It has been over four weeks since the interview; is it appropriate to contact them for an update, or should I continue to wait?

Answer: You - and other folks waiting to hear after interviews - should realise that hiring committees (or individuals, for that matter) are absolutely glacial in their speed. Always wait a week after the time they SAID they'd get back to you, and then IN YOUR MOST CHEERFUL, ACCOMMODATING TONE, call to ask about the process. Don't be whiny and don't be aggressive, or you'll be out of luck. View this as another chance to let the team know what a great, funny, agreeable addition you'd be. Since receptionists or administrative assistants will likely field the call (and they have lots of influence in who gets through to the hirers), be sure to be oozing charm when you speak with them.

Now, should the worst happen and you not get the job this time, be sure to view this as a "laboratory" for your job search. Ask if you could have a brief conversation either in person or on the phone about what qualities you would need to beef up in order to be a competitive candidate for another job with them. You'd be surprised how often hirings go sour and the folks need a replacement within weeks or months. If you've gotten to know them and have shown yourself to be eager to learn and please (and someone who takes feedback well), you're just the person they'll call. But hopefully, you'll never need this advice!

Good luck!

Important tips on what to do after an interview

by Michael Spiropoulos

Highly successful job candidates are alert to the fact that an interview often does not finish when you walk out of the interview room. One of the things these candidates do is adhere to a few simple but important post interview actions that often yield great results. Below are some of the actions they take. We've presented them to you in the form of seven tips. If you're serious about getting a great job we urge you to follow these tips closely.

Tip 1: Change your existing mindset. Get out of the mind set that interviews finish when you walk out of the interview room. Post interview follow up demonstrates high levels of enthusiasm as well as professionalism. If the interviewer cannot decide between you and another candidate the post interview follow up will help your cause greatly.

Tip 2: The three-day rule. Initiate contact about 3 days after the interview. That's usually too short a time for them to have made a decision.

Tip 3: Try to avoid ringing. You're likely to make a nuisance of yourself. Telephone contact may cause you and/or the interviewer embarrassment. Only talk to the interviewer when you're fairly certain that they're ready to talk to you.

Tip 4: Send a letter or email. It's best to write a thank you letter or email. In your letter reiterate your enthusiasm for the job, tell them how much you enjoyed meeting them and, if you're in a position to do so, offer them more relevant information about yourself.

Tip 5: Contact your references. Tell them about

- The job
- The Company
- Your major responsibilities and key targets

Giving them this information will help your referees focus their answers to suit your needs even more. You're also reminding them of how important the job is to you.

What to do if you're unsuccessful

If you don't get the job the first thing to do is not to beat yourself up. Do what other successful candidates do and put it down as a learning experience. Beating yourself up will only undermine your future confidence.

Tip 6: Seek feedback. If you don't get the job ring the interviewer and politely ask for some feedback for the purposes of self development.

- It helps to have a few questions ready when you ring.
- When seeking feedback, be absolutely certain that you do not become defensive or attack the interviewer. Remember, the point about asking for feedback is to learn how to improve for next time.
- If you learn during the feedback stage that you were very competitive take the opportunity to tell the interview that you would be interested in any future positions.

Note that some interviewers, unfortunately, view giving feedback as a waste of their time and/or feel too uncomfortable about making any negative comments so they may not wish to talk to you. If that's the case, don't take it personally. At least you tried.

Tip 7: Use the feedback to improve your future performance. Take the time to give some serious thought to what the interviewer said. Then ask yourself the all important question: "What can I do to ensure that next time I don't repeat the same mistake/s?"

Good luck!

You scored **45** points.

Our analysis of your score:

You have done a stellar job preparing to negotiate. You might want to conduct one last dry run with a friend to make sure you have your strategy down pat. All in all, you have probably done as much as you can to get the outcome you want. Soon you'll be the one they'll come to for a raise.

This quiz should have given you a sense of the specific areas in which you could spend more

time. If you are still unsure, review our list of [Top Ten Tips for a Successful Salary Negotiation.](#)

1. Are you sure you have selected the most appropriate person(s) with whom to negotiate?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, I considered all the different people who have influence over my career and some role in deciding its future.</i>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, I just assumed that this is the right person since she is my boss.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, it did not seem worth thinking about.</i>	

2. Have you identified the important issues that you and your company want to negotiate (e.g., salary increase, non-monetary compensation, job responsibilities, etc.)?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, I have, and I have also asked my boss about what she expects from me.</i>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>I know I want to talk salary, but I haven't anticipated what my boss wants to discuss.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>I am only interested in the bottom-line--how much they are willing to pay me.</i>	

3. For each of the issues above, have you thought about what really you need and why you need it?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, I have asked myself why I want what I want and tried to determine what I really care about. Then I prioritised the items on my list.</i>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, I have a sense of what is important to me, but I have not really examined why.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, I want more money and a promotion.</i>	

4. Have you tried to predict what the company wants out of this negotiation?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, I have anticipated what my boss's agenda may be, then consulted with colleagues who have been through a few of these types of meetings.</i>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, I assume we have the same goals, but I'm not really sure.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, I do not see why its agenda is important. I know what I want.</i>	

5. If you do not like what your boss offers you in this meeting, have you considered what you will do?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, I have developed a Plan B that includes actions I will take and alternative ideas that will work for both sides.</i>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, if I have to, I can think on my feet and adjust my requests to what they offer.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, if I do not get what I want, I will think hard about leaving.</i>	

6. How would you know if the offer presented to you were fair and appropriate?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>I have researched the market and my company to find out the typical range of salaries and compensation for people with similar skills and experience.</i>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>I have asked a few of my peers at work what they make.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If I get what I ask for, then I know it is fair.</i>	

7. Do you know who has the final signoff on the outcome of your negotiation?		
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, I am aware of the chain of command that is responsible for finalising this process and have thought of ways to help my boss present my case to senior management.</i>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, I just figured that my boss would make the decision.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, I think my work speaks for itself.</i>	

8. Is there anything about your relationship with your boss that may make this conversation difficult?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, we always discuss any problems as they occur, so I don't foresee having to address them during our meeting.</i>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, we've had conflicts in the past, and I am prepared to address them if they come up.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, but if conflicts come up, I will point out that the meeting is about my work performance, not our personal differences.</i>	

9. Have you put together a plan for the meeting?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes, I have written an agenda to make sure that I touch on all the key issues.</i>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, I know what I want to talk about, but I'm not sure what my priorities should be.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No, I don't think the sequence in which I discuss each issue matters, as long as I know what I want.</i>	

Dealing with questions about salary history

by Michael Chaffers

Q: How do I respond to the salary history question when I am currently grossly underpaid for the work that I do, and I am trying to correct that as I interview for new jobs?

A: Your best strategy is to keep them focused on what is an appropriate amount for you given your experience, skills and credentials today. This requires some homework, since you have to translate those intangibles into a dollar figure or a range of figures. In addition, be prepared to explain why you are seeking a significant jump in your salary and be ready to help the employer justify paying you this increased amount - those people do not want to feel as if they are overpaying you. You could try saying, "I chose to work at my last job for less than my market value for very specific reasons (e.g., gain experience, restart career, they had money problems). Now that I have benefited from experience, as I look for a new employer, I want to make sure that I am being paid fairly for my talents." As you follow this advice, do not forget that you have to be prepared to discuss your current salary, even though it ought to be irrelevant. If that information matters to the employer, they will either insist on talking about it, or they will learn it another way. Try to cover the issue quickly and steer the conversation back to its rightful place - what you ought to make, given the value of your talents in the market

How do I figure out what I'm worth?

by Michael Chaffers

Q: How do I figure out what I am worth?

A: You have to figure this out before you begin your negotiation. You should conduct some research and establish what seems to be a reasonable range for others with similar experiences and credentials at similar jobs in similar industries, then ask for the highest figure in that range that you can justify, given your distinctive capabilities.

Q. What salary should I ask for?

A. This question is related to the previous one - you should ask for what you think you are worth. When you do your homework, you will have your answer.

In selecting a salary figure, avoid tactics that lead to arbitrary numbers. Whenever you put a figure out there, you have to prepare a persuasive answer for the question "Where does that number come from?" In many cases, a random increase over your last salary feels like an arbitrary number. You will be more persuasive, and probably feel better about the figure, if you do your research.

I have no problem quoting a range, as long as you are certain that the lowest figure is still a fair salary and you are willing to accept it to close the deal as long as your other interests are satisfied (e.g., benefits, title, job responsibilities). One way to lessen the danger of being tied to the lowest number in the range is to make clear why you believe the higher figures are more appropriate for you, given what the market pays for your distinctive abilities and experience.

Q. How do I counter-offer?

A. Many people negotiate based on the assumption that people start at extremes and then haggle to an appropriate compromise in the middle. So it is often wise to assume that is what the other side is doing. Many people then counter by asking for 10% or 20% more than whatever the company just offered. This seems silly to me, since all you are doing is putting out an arbitrary number that you really cannot support if pressed.

Instead of playing their game by putting out your own extreme number, stay true to your research and put out a figure that is justifiable given what the market is paying. Be sure to share your reasoning and data, too. Your goal is persuade the company to agree to what's fair, not haggle to a compromise between two relatively arbitrary figures.

Q. Should I tell them my current salary on my resume or when they ask?

A. Most HR departments seem to want this information at some point in the hiring process. However, like everything else, this is negotiable. By not answering it right away, you may risk losing a few opportunities, but most companies will not let a disagreement stop the interviewing process. If you choose not to respond directly, you can say (or write) "I will be happy to discuss my current salary when we talk about that issue. Until then, there are many other aspects of the job I would like to discuss."

If the company insists on the information, ask why they need it and think of other ways to satisfy that interest. For example, if the company wishes to ensure that there is a figure that would satisfy both of you so that no one is wasting time, an exchange of salary expectations may be sufficient. You could say, "I would feel fairly treated if I were paid comparable to what others make, which I believe is about \$x. Is that in line with your expectations?"

Finally, if the company insists, provide the information. At worst, the company will use the information to make you a salary offer. If you think it is too low, your task is the same as it always is when facing an unacceptable offer - persuade them that you should be offered more, based on the value you can provide and what the market is paying for your skills.

Top ten tips for successful salary negotiations

by Michael Chaffers

1. Be persuasive: It's hard to force your boss to increase your compensation, and trying to do so can potentially damage your working relationship. On the other hand, it's much easier to persuade her or him that it might benefit the organisation to pay you more, and that doing so will likely improve the way you deal with each other going forward.

2. Aim high, and be realistic: Many researchers have found a strong correlation between people's aspirations and the results they achieve in negotiation. At the same time, you want to suggest ideas to which your boss can realistically say yes.

3. Start off with the right tone: To be persuasive, you want to let your boss know that you will listen and seek to understand his or her views. At the same time, you expect your boss to do the same for you, so you can work together to address this issue. Avoid ultimatums, threats, and other coercive behaviour.

4. Clarify your interests: **Your compensation should satisfy a range of needs, not just salary. Make sure you have thought about other types of compensation that would be valuable as well - like profit sharing, stock options that vest immediately, a bonus, greater work responsibilities, a quicker promotion schedule, increased vacation, or flexible hours.**
5. Anticipate their interests: **Just like you, your boss has needs and concerns of her or his own to satisfy. To persuade them to say yes, your ideas will have to address those interests.**
6. Create several options: **Joint brainstorming is the most effective way to find ideas that satisfy everyone's interests. Brainstorming works best when you separate it from commitment - first create possible solutions, then decide among them.**
7. Focus on objective criteria: **It is far easier to persuade someone to agree with your proposal if they see how that proposal is firmly grounded on objective criteria, such as what similar firms pay people of like experience, or what others in the firm make.**
8. Think through your alternatives: **In case you cannot persuade your boss to say yes, you need to have a Plan B to satisfy your interests. Part of preparation is creating a specific action plan so that you know what you'll do if you have to walk away from the table.**
9. Prepare thoughtfully to achieve your goals: **This is the only aspect of your negotiations you can completely control. To take advantage of all the above advice, you have to invest a significant amount of your time and energy.**
10. Review to learn: **The only way you can really improve your ability to negotiate is to explicitly learn from your experiences. After you finish negotiations, reflect on what you did that worked well, and what you might want to do differently.**



WISH YOU ALL THE BEST.....SUNDARA VEER RAJU

All about Interview.

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